

of Beddoes with the dramatic verse of a
master of the
metre in its statelier narrative form,
Tennyson:

I once was out with Henry in the days
When Henry loved me, and we came upon
A wild-fowl sitting on her nest, so still
I reach'd my hand and touched; she did not stir;
The snow had frozen round her, and she sat
Stone-dead upon a heap of ice-cold eggs.
Look how this love, this mother, runs through all
The world God made—even the beast—the bird!
Any ear must notice the difference. Not
only are the
individual lines in Tennyson more regular
and so more
monotonous, and also slower through their
avoidance of
the feminine endings or extra syllables which
lend speed
to a verse like:

And feed young children with the blood of your
heart;
they also for the same reason refuse to
coalesce with one
another into a verse-paragraph, in spite of
the author's
deliberate effort to make them do so by
ending his lines
with words like 'upon'. Each decasyllabic
somehow persists
in scanning itself separately, with a sort
of conscious
pride in its own virtuous avoidance of any
undue licence.
It is as if the passage were being written by a
poetical
typewriter, which very beautifully rang a little
silver bell
at the dose of each line, and pulled itself
elaborately back
to begin each new one; whereas Beddoes has
the sinuous
onward gliding of a living adder through
the grass.
Open Webster:

OMen

That lye upon your death-beds, and are haunted
With howling wives, neere trust them, they'le re-
marry
Ere the worme pierce your winding sheete: ere
the Spider
Make a thiane curtaine for your Epitaphes.

The kinship needs no stressing. Metrically,
indeed, Bed-
does may often seem even nearer to the
slightly decadent
softness of Fletcher or Shirley than to
Webster's harsher